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CONSPIRATOR IN SACRAMENTO IDENTIFICATION THEFT RING
PLEADS GUILTY TO POSSESSION OF STOLEN U.S. MAIL AND
CONSPIRACY TO COMMIT BANK FRAUD

SACRAMENTO--United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that MICHELLE T. RODRIGUEZ, 27, of Sacramento, California, plead guilty today before United States District Judge Frank C. Damrell, Jr. to a single count of conspiracy and a single count of possession of stolen United States mail.

This case is the product of a combined investigation by the Sacramento County Sheriff's Department, the Sacramento Police Department, the United States Postal Inspection Service, and other law enforcement agencies in the greater Sacramento metropolitan area.

This case was also resolved with the assistance of the "Sacramento Citizens' Crime Alert Rewards Program." The Crime Alert Program is dedicated to helping the Sacramento County Sheriff's Department and the Sacramento City Police Department apprehend the most wanted suspects in the City of Sacramento and its surrounding areas. Under the Crime Alert Program, citizens can receive a cash reward of up to \$1000 for information leading to the arrest of a suspect or information that solves an unsolved crime.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Michelle Rodriguez (no relation), who is prosecuting the case, RODRIGUEZ and several named and unnamed conspirators executed a scheme to manufacture checks with account numbers of others. Specifically, RODRIGUEZ is alleged to have conspired with CURTIS MARTINEZ, 35, of Carmichael, California, to steal identification and account number information from the United States mail and elsewhere to create the fraudulent checks. The conspiracy charges the defendants with using identity information of various victims and creating numerous phoney driver's licenses for use in order to cash the fraudulent checks.

In February 2007, law enforcement received tips in response to a Crime Alert Bulletin for MARTINEZ' whereabouts. On February 7, 2007, as law enforcement approached, MARTINEZ and RODRIGUEZ fled in a vehicle in Sacramento. After MARTINEZ took law enforcement on a high speed chase through the streets of Sacramento, MARTINEZ and RODRIGUEZ were stopped and detained. In the vehicle, law enforcement found over 25 manufactured checks

bearing the name of several different individuals, social security cards and numbers of others, ownership documents belonging to others, and numerous store receipts for fraudulent transactions. Over 50 different victims have been identified in this case. Court records in this case reveal that RODRIGUEZ and MARTINEZ possessed for fraudulent use black check stock, VersaCheck software, Adobe PhotoShop software, a computer laptop, a printer, a computer storage disk, and stolen United States mail.

RODRIGUEZ is scheduled to be sentenced on December 3, 2007. RODRIGUEZ faces up to five years imprisonment for her involvement in the conspiracy and an additional five years for possession of stolen United States mail, an order of restitution, a substantial fine, and a three year term of supervised release.

MARTINEZ is presently in state custody on parole violations for unrelated fraud offenses. MARTINEZ is charged with a single count of conspiracy and a single count of possession of stolen United States mail. MARTINEZ is additionally charged with a single count of credit card fraud, 22 counts of bank fraud, and six counts of aggravated identification theft. For the credit card fraud charge, MARTINEZ faces up to ten years imprisonment; for each bank fraud charge he faces up to 30 years imprisonment; and for each aggravated identification theft charge he faces a minimum mandatory jail term of two years. However, the actual sentence will be determined at the discretion of the court after consideration of the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of variables, and any applicable statutory sentencing factors.

As to defendant MARTINEZ, the charges are only allegations and the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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